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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]
Director, Intelligence Community Staff

FROM: [REDACTED]
Chairman, DCID 1/2 Committee

SUBJECT: Whither DCID 1/2?

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1. This memo is submitted as a discussion paper for our 19 April meeting. The survey recently done for you indicates, inter alia, that:

- there is a large number of organizations which profess to be "users" of DCID 1/2 and their range of usage is quite wide;

- no user expressed fundamental dissatisfaction with the DCID 1/2 mechanism as it currently exists and operates;

- recommendations for change centered principally on level of detail and complexity, with some respondents wanting less and others more.

2. Users have integrated the DCID 1/2 priority assignment system into their modus operandi, each interpreting the purpose and significance of that system to suit. Thus, they are comfortable with the system, since it has been made congruent with and, therefore, supportive of their preferred ways of doing business. It also provides a useful channel for seeking greater visibility for intelligence requirements and targets they consider particularly important. So long as the ground rules are not changed to make DCID 1/2 priorities guidance more explicit and incumbent upon Community agencies, users are likely to strongly support both retention of the DCID and its current basic methodology.

3. Our options from here are, first, to do nothing. There is, after all, no Community ground swell for change. The administrative work load and committee meeting schedule generated by current DCID 1/2 practices are not excessive and will not strain assigned responses in the foreseeable future. A variant second option would be to retain the current DCID 1/2 approach, but to effect procedural changes designed to streamline the process. This option need not be discussed at length here because we are likely to implement such changes in any event, should they appear worthwhile.

4. There is, at least theoretically, a third option which is to terminate DCID 1/2 on the grounds that its benefits are not worth the cost and effort involved or that the purpose for which the 1/2 process was established is no longer valid. A fourth option would continue 1/2, but with fundamental changes that would yield greater benefit, perhaps against a redefined objective. The key questions, of course, are: (1) what do we want DCID 1/2 to do; and (2) to what extent is it doing it now? The current DCID 1/2 directs establishment of "comprehensive requirements categories and priorities to serve as basic substantive guidance for the operation, planning, and programming of the overall US foreign intelligence effort." The requirements categories and priorities are to "reflect solely the relative importance of topical information on foreign countries to the policy formulation, planning, and operation of the NSC, its members, and other Federal organizations. They are intended to provide a framework for current operational requirements of the collection, production, and support functions, as well as for projecting mid- and longer-range requirements and priorities."

5. In my view, current DCID 1/2 methodology and procedure gives insufficient operational recognition to the term "relative importance." As a result, the principal mission of 1/2 has been underemphasized. That mission, I believe, is the maintenance of a continuous, formal process whereby the Community and its principal customers jointly identify, on a macro level, the problems, issues, situations, etc. against which the nation's intelligence assets are to be deployed over time. Since those assets will never be sufficient to satisfy all requirements, the primary function of the DCID 1/2 process is to deal with the necessity for prioritization by:

a. categorizing the various intelligence needs and illuminating the issues and considerations pertaining to determination of their relative importance;

b. providing a Community forum wherein contending views of the relative importance of particular intelligence needs can be identified, debated, and determinations made;

c. requiring that the necessary prioritization choices be made; and

d. maintaining an up-to-date register of priorities for use as guidance by Community managers and planners and as evidence that we do, indeed, have our act together.

6. The foregoing functions, in my opinion, more than justify continuing DCID 1/2. Its current manifestation, however, performs function c. poorly and, consequently, does the others less well than might be expected. The DCID 1/2 matrix is, in fact, an aggregation of individually and separately assigned topical priorities. Relative importance is determined principally by extrapolation, e.g., Priority 3 topics are relatively more important than Priority 6 topics, and is not a systemic function of determining the priorities themselves. In my memo to Committee members of 2 February (copy attached), I proposed several fundamental changes to current practice designed to make

determination of relative importance a structural function of the priorities assignment process, and to otherwise make the results of that process more useful to Community managers and planners. As indicated therein, I floated the proposals in part to determine the Community's reaction to potential change. The responses I've received parallel the user survey findings: there is little incentive within the Community to change; the members are basically comfortable with the present system. Therefore, if we are going to support a fundamental change in DCID 1/2 procedure, the impetus is going to have to come from the DDCI.



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Attachment:

Memo to DCID 1/2 Committee
Members, dated 2 February 82

SUBJECT: Whither DCID 1/2?

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